



**CACHUMA OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE BOARD**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Cachuma Improvement Projects Proposed to Assure Water Supply to South Coast**

The Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board (COMB) is considering a bond issue to fund approximately \$16 million for projects that would make critically needed improvements to 1950s-era facilities that convey water from Lake Cachuma to the South Coast Santa Barbara area communities.

COMB is responsible for operation and maintenance of the water delivery system that carries Cachuma Project water and State Project water to the City of Santa Barbara and the water agencies in Goleta, Montecito, and Carpinteria. The proposed bond issue would not increase costs to these COMB member agencies for a number of years.

The projects are part of a 10-year capital improvement program aimed at making vital maintenance, repair, and replacement improvements to aging conveyance facilities. The changes would increase reliability of water deliveries from Lake Cachuma through the South Coast Conduit pipeline.

Eighty percent of South Coast's water supplies come through this single pipeline. Any interruptions in the flow of water because of emergencies, peak demands, or maintenance activities could cause serious water supply problems for the South Coast. The proposed projects would provide additional redundancy in a critical part of the system, and improve portions of the South Coast Conduit and its associated facilities.

*City of Santa Barbara • Goleta Water District • Montecito Water District  
Carpinteria Valley Water District • Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District #1  
General Manager Kathleen A. Rees*

Money from the proposed 30-year bond issue would be combined with a state grant from Proposition 50 of \$3.2 million, resulting in a total of about \$18 million to fund several priority projects approved by the COMB Board. Decisions about which projects to fund were made after a thorough analysis of the agency's capital improvement program.

The COMB Board considered several funding options and selected a revenue bond as the most cost-effective financing method. For the first five years, the estimated \$1.1 million a year to repay the bond would come from COMB's annual capital improvement budget by substituting the bond payments for what is normally spent by the participating agencies on major infrastructure work each year. Consequently, the proposed bond financing would not increase costs or water rates of the participating COMB member agencies during that time.

If the bond proposal is approved in July by the COMB Board and the five COMB member agencies, the most important pipeline project could begin work in September 2009. It will take several years to complete all of the priority projects.

The \$3.2 million from Proposition 50 is earmarked for the largest and most significant project on COMB's priority list. This key project involves construction of a redundant section of pipeline along the South Coast Conduit's Upper Reach at a cost of \$9 million. The project would increase operational flexibility, water supply reliability, and restore the original capacity of the conduit in the Goleta area to accommodate peak summer demand and allow for shutdowns to carry out much needed maintenance on the existing conduit.

Other projects on the priority list include: replacement of a damaged section of the South Coast Conduit that crosses Mission Creek, which will incorporate improved steelhead fish passage (\$3 million); a program to map the pipeline location through a computer Geographic Information System along the conduit's 26-mile length in order to better protect it and reduce widespread pipeline easement encroachments (\$1 million); rehabilitation of laterals, valves, manholes and air vents, particularly in the Carpinteria area (\$2.5 million); and construction of new COMB office facilities to replace substandard and damaged temporary modular offices (\$2.9 million). The cost of the office building is likely to be considerably less than this planning estimate.

More information about these and future COMB projects is available on COMB's website at [www.cachuma-board.org](http://www.cachuma-board.org), or by calling the agency at 805-687-4011.

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